UNITED
NATIONS

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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1999/657
8 June 1999

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE UNITED NATIONS OPERATION IN CYPRUS

(for the period from 9 December 1998 to 9 June 1999)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report covers developments from 9 December 1998 to 9 June 1999 and brings up to date the record of activities of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) pursuant to Security Council resolution 186 (1964) of 4 March 1964 and subsequent Security Council resolutions, most recently resolution 1217 (1998) of 22 December 1998. With regard to my mission of good offices, diplomatic efforts are currently under way on which I expect to be able to report before the end of the month.

II. ACTIVITIES OF THE FORCE

A. Maintenance of the ceasefire and the military status quo

2. During the period under review, the situation along the ceasefire lines remained essentially stable. As in the past, there were numerous small incidents, most of which were dealt with at the local level. There was an increasing number of acts of provocation, such as pointing and cocking of weapons, shouting of insults, throwing of objects, obscene gestures and shining of searchlights at the other side's positions, particularly in Nicosia where the lines are in close proximity. This has become a matter of serious concern, since such acts could trigger a serious incident. The incidents also included some overflights over the United Nations buffer zone from each side, as well as military construction on or close to the ceasefire lines, in some cases involving the National Guard, forward of the lines inside the United Nations buffer zone. UNFICYP continued to resist firmly any challenge to the delineation of the ceasefire lines.

3. The routine replacement by the Turkish forces of marker buoys off the shore south of Famagusta led to several days of tension in May, in part because one buoy was placed in the wrong position for a short while. A National Guard vessel crossed the maritime security line and came very close to the buoys. The maritime security line marks the eastern seaward extension of the median of the

buffer zone, which vessels from both sides are advised, for their own safety, not to cross. UNFICYP posted new, more visible signs on the shore to warn fishing and tourist boats from the south, which tend to cross the line in increased numbers during the summer months. Turkish forces supply boats travelling to and from Kokkina regularly cross the line at the western extension of the buffer zone closer to the shore than the minimum distance of 3,000 metres required by UNFICYP.

4. UNFICYP continued to monitor the fenced area of Varosha. Suggestions by the Turkish Cypriot side that they might open Varosha for settlement provoked a strong public reaction on the Greek Cypriot side. UNFICYP did not observe any significant change in the status quo in that area, for which the United Nations holds the Government of Turkey responsible.

B. Restoration of normal conditions and humanitarian functions (civil affairs and civilian police)

5. The suspension of bi-communal contacts imposed by the Turkish Cypriot authorities remained in effect and continued to limit on-island contacts between the two communities. For example, an event organized by UNFICYP at the Ledra Palace Hotel in the buffer zone on 6 March to mark International Women's Day had to go ahead without the presence of Turkish Cypriots. It should be noted that the trade unions on both sides have continued to maintain regular contact. On 28 and 29 May, they held a forum, which was attended by 300 Greek and Turkish Cypriot trade union representatives.

6. UNFICYP continued to facilitate civilian use of the buffer zone for manufacturing and agriculture and for the maintenance of public utilities. This activity includes the establishment of written agreements in order to regularize access to the buffer zone. UNFICYP also continued to act as intermediary between the two sides to facilitate cooperation on such matters as the distribution of water and electricity and the disposal of sewage.

7. During the period under review, seven Turkish citizens and five Turkish Cypriots crossed the buffer zone to the southern part of the island and were detained by the police. Some were released after a few days, while others were charged and later fined in court or sentenced to prison terms. Similarly, three Greek Cypriots and three Greek citizens were detained after crossing northward. UNFICYP visited the prisoners and facilitated their subsequent release, as well as that of their vehicles. Both sides returned impounded items more expeditiously than in the past. In accordance with long-standing procedure, UNFICYP is to be involved without delay whenever the police on either side detain a member of the other community.

8. On 21 January 1999 and 30 March 1999, 1,280 and 1,350 Turkish Cypriots, respectively, made a pilgrimage to the Hala Sultan Tekke Mosque in Larnaca. On 12 April 1999, 1,452 Greek Cypriots undertook a pilgrimage to the Apostolos Andreas Monastery in the Karpas Peninsula. UNFICYP assisted in arranging those events.

9. UNFICYP continued to carry out humanitarian tasks in respect of Greek Cypriots and Maronites residing in the northern part of the island and Turkish Cypriots in the southern part. There are now 452 Greek Cypriots in the Karpas area and one in Kyrenia, as well as 159 Maronites in the Kormakiti area. On 2 October 1998, the Turkish Cypriot authorities informed UNFICYP of the lifting of certain controls affecting Maronites and Greek Cypriots in the northern part of the island (except in restricted military areas). Following initial delays in implementation, Greek Cypriots on the Karpas Peninsula are now allowed to travel in the northern part of the island without first reporting to the local police. First-degree relatives residing in the southern part of the island benefit from more flexible crossing regulations and may stay with their relatives in the north beyond the previously imposed time limit.

10. According to the Turkish Cypriot authorities, the review of legislation that prohibits Greek Cypriots and Maronites residing in the northern part of the island from bequeathing their movable and immovable property to heirs that do not reside there has not yet been completed (see S/1998/1149, para. 16).

11. Some 310 Turkish Cypriots in the southern part of the island have made themselves known to UNFICYP. They had made very little use of the UNFICYP liaison office in Limassol, which was opened in December 1996; the office was therefore closed on 1 March 1999. UNFICYP has increased visits to the areas of residence of those Turkish Cypriots. Meetings between family members residing on different sides of the buffer zone still occur at the UNFICYP exchange point (at the crossing in Nicosia) at the rate of two or three per week.

C. Missing persons

12. Because of continuing disagreement between the two sides, the Committee on Missing Persons was once again unable to proceed to its substantive work, despite the vigorous efforts of its third member. It is to be hoped that the two sides will assess the implications of this situation with due urgency and seriousness, with a view to overcoming the stalemate on this humanitarian issue.

III. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

13. The United Nations Development Programme, through the United Nations Office for Project Services, continued to implement its programme aimed at promoting confidence-building by encouraging the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities to work together in the preparation and implementation of projects in areas of mutual concern, notably public health, environment, sanitation, water, urban renovation, preservation of cultural heritage, natural resources and education.

IV. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

14. As of May 1999, UNFICYP comprised 1,223 troops and 34 civilian police. The military personnel are from Argentina (412), Austria (239), Canada (2), Finland (9), Hungary (109), Ireland (20), Slovenia (27), the Netherlands (101)

and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (304). The Argentinian contingent includes eight officers from Bolivia (2), Brazil (2) Paraguay (1) and Uruguay (3). The civilian police are provided by Australia (19) and Ireland (15). UNFICYP currently has 41 international civilian staff and 215 local civilian staff.

15. In April 1999, I accepted the resignation of my Special Adviser for Cyprus, Diego Cordovez, who will continue as my Special Adviser on other matters, especially relating to Latin American affairs. His advice has been invaluable and I am grateful for his contribution, particularly in connection with the meetings in Troutbeck and Glion in 1997. Ann Hercus continues as my Deputy Special Representative and Chief of Mission of the United Nations Operation in Cyprus and Major-General Evergisto A. de Vergara continues as Force Commander.

V. FINANCIAL ASPECTS

16. The General Assembly, in its resolution 53/231 of 8 June 1999, decided to appropriate an amount of $45,630,927 gross for the maintenance of UNFICYP for the 12-month period from 1 July 1999 to 30 June 2000. That amount includes the pledged voluntary contributions of one third of the cost of the Force, equivalent to $14,630,810, from the Government of Cyprus and the annual pledge of $6.5 million from the Government of Greece.

17. Therefore, should the Security Council decide to extend the mandate of UNFICYP for a further period of six months as recommended in paragraph 21 below, the cost of maintaining the Force would be approximately $22.8 million. Of that amount, approximately $12.2 million will be assessed on Member States.

18. As at 31 May 1999, unpaid assessments to the Special Account for UNFICYP from 16 June 1993 to 30 June 1999 amounted to $17.4 million. Total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations at the same date amounted to $1,568 million.

VI. OBSERVATIONS

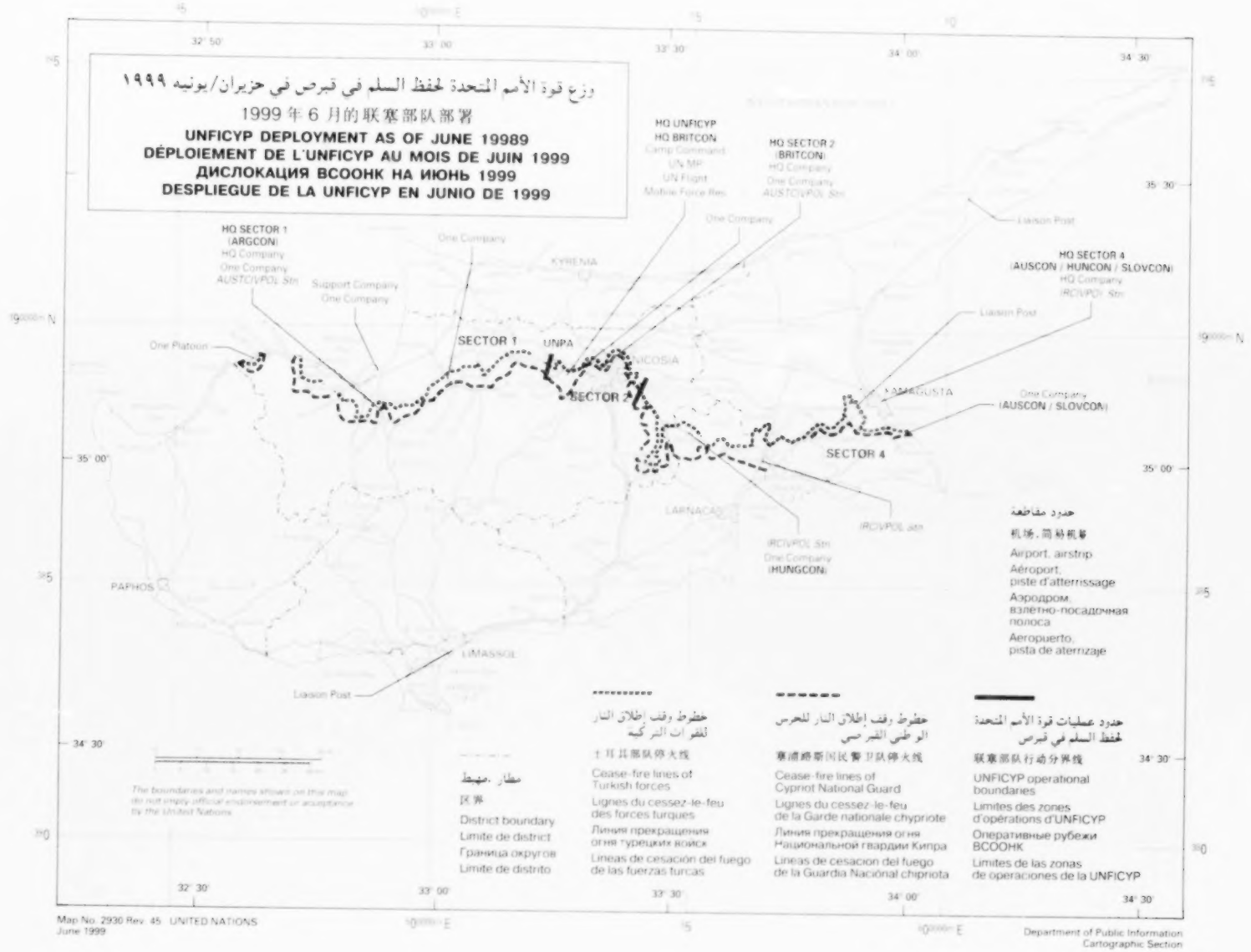
19. During the past six months, the situation along the ceasefire lines remained stable. UNFICYP continued to use its best efforts to maintain the ceasefire by maintaining the United Nations buffer zone between the ceasefire lines and responding quickly to incidents. These were mostly minor, but the increasing practice by members of the opposing forces of engaging in provocative behaviour along the lines heightens the risk of more serious incidents and thus gives cause for concern.

20. The United Nations acts on the premise that both sides wish to prevent incidents. This is best achieved by enforcing strict discipline along the ceasefire lines and cooperating effectively with UNFICYP on the basis of long-standing principles and practices. The adoption of the UNFICYP package of measures to reduce tension along the ceasefire lines, which has been mentioned in past reports, would further contribute to stabilizing the situation. More

direct contract between Greek and Turkish Cypriots on the island would also influence the atmosphere positively.

21. In the existing circumstances, the presence of UNFICYP on the island remains indispensable for the maintenance of the ceasefire between the two sides. I therefore recommend that the Security Council extend the mandate of the Force for a further period of six months, until 31 December 1999. I am consulting the parties concerned on the matter and shall report to the Council as soon as the consultations have been completed.

22. In conclusion, I wish to express appreciation to my Deputy Special Representative and Chief of Mission in Cyprus, Ann Hercus, and to pay tribute to the Force Commander, Major-General Evergisto A. de Vergara, and the men and women serving with UNFICYP for the efficiency and dedication with which they have discharged the responsibilities entrusted to them by the Security Council.



Map No. 2930 Rev. 45 UNITED NATIONS
June 1999

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